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As a result, he was sent to the Atlanta Penitentiary for three years. The facts in this case show that the boy was held for considerable time in jail and was then arraigned in court without either the investigation or helpful contact of a probation officer. He was released without supervision or advice, except that given by the court, and naturally relapsed into crime.

"In another case which occurred in New York State, two young men were convicted on plea of guilty for a violation of the White Slave Act. The circumstances of their crime showed that they had brought with them from another state a young woman of questionable character, all of them being somewhat under the influence of liquor at the time. The young men were found to have been of previous good character, this being their first offense. They were placed in the care of a state probation officer by a District Court Judge. This officer reports that they did exceptionally well while on probation, reporting regularly, taking the pledge and abstaining from liquor, working steadily, and giving every indication of permanent reform."

Fortunately, the present intolerable situation in the Federal Courts is temporary. Congress has the power to enact legislation granting the Federal Courts power to suspend sentence and establishing the use of probation. A bill for this purpose has been pending for the past three years and is now being actively pressed for passage. It is known as the Owen-Hayden Bill and provides, briefly, that judges in the United States District Courts may suspend sentence and place on probation, except for a few of the most serious felonies, wherever the circumstances of the offense and the public interest permit. The bill also provides that every Federal judge may appoint one salaried probation officer who shall receive his expenses and compensation for actual services at a rate of five dollars per day. The judges may appoint as many additional volunteer probation officers as they desire. The usual provisions of the best state probation laws relating to the fixing of the period of probation, the establishment of the conditions of probation, providing for regular reports to the probation officer, the collection of money for family support, fines and restitution on installments, and for visiting by the probation officer, are incorporated.

The bill was drafted by the National Probation Association and has its active support, as well as that of other organizations and individuals in the country interested in the work of the courts. At the last session, hearings on the bill were held before the Judiciary Committee of both branches of Congress. The Senate Judiciary Committee on December 20th reported the bill favorably and it is now upon the Senate calendar. The bill is also making progress in the House. The support of everyone interested in the progress of probation and the improvement and humanizing of our courts is urgently needed to secure the passage of the bill at the present short session.

CHARLES L. CHUTE, *Albany, N. Y.*

Secretary National Probation Association.

**Life-Termers Can Not Get Parole in Louisiana.**—In reply to an inquiry of Robert H. Marr, of the Board of Parole, in New Orleans, in reference to the powers and duties of that board, Judge A. V. Coco, attorney general rendered an opinion Jan. 13, covering the intent of the parole laws passed by the Legislature at its recent session. Judge Coco holds that paroles may only be granted

in cases where indeterminate sentences have been imposed, and retrospectively in cases where sentence was passed in similar cases before the indeterminate sentence was instituted.

The board cannot parole a prisoner whose sentence is determined by law, and he holds, therefore, that life terms cannot be paroled.

In cases where the sentence is indeterminate, Judge Coco holds the board is not compelled to grant the parole, but should use its discretion—broadly speaking, it should judge between the applicant and society. In granting or refusing parole it should look into the conscience of the prisoner as well as the physical parts of the case, and consider the elements surrounding the crime to judge of the character of the prisoner. If the crime was attended with atrocity, the board has the right to consider that as bearing on the character of the prisoner, and as counterbalancing his good conduct while under restraint.—*The Times-Picayune*, Jan. 14.

#### POLICE.

**New York Police Records.**—Police Commissioner Woods has revised the entire system of police records in use in New York City. Arrests, accidents and complaints are now recorded by patrolmen on the street on loose leaf pocket memorandum forms which have been specially prepared in such a manner as to enable the patrolmen to check the pertinent data of each case with a minimum amount of writing. Formerly the patrolmen wrote these reports on scraps of paper or in their personal memorandum books.

In the station house the data of arrests, accidents and complaints are transferred to cards under the direction of the desk lieutenant instead of reports compiled from the books, are sent to headquarters. Each precinct sends its cards to the district inspector daily and the reports and returns from each district office are collected by a mail messenger in an automobile.

At police headquarters these cards of which an average of 2,000 are received daily, are transferred to punched Hollereth tabulating cards, under the direction of Mills E. Case, Secretary of the Department, who is statistician of wide experience.

By means of this system all police activities are so recorded and classified with a minimum of clerical labor that the department has a complete record of every case available at any time and is able to study different police problems by means of these Hollereth cards.

LEONHARD FELIX FULD, *New York City*.

**Finger-Print Evidence.**—Novelists have made us familiar with the bloody print of a finger tip that is found near the scene of crime and leads to the apprehension of the criminal; and to-day no detective who carries "coke" in his left arm is necessary in a case where so substantial a clue is found as an impress of the lineations of the guilty person's thumb. Moreover, Bertillon has taught the police the reliability of finger prints as a part of a system of identification far superior to the ordinary photograph. We are informed by a correspondent of the *New York World* (Aaron M. Blattman, city finger-print expert, in a letter published December 8, 1916) that identification by means of finger prints originated with the Chinese 2,000 years before Christ, and that as to the possibilities of two finger prints being exactly alike, Balthazard, a French expert, calculated that the chances are less than one for every one